



Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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Persius Duskywing *Erynnis persius persius*

State Status: **Endangered**

Federal Status: None

Description: The Persius Duskywing is a dark brown, almost black, skipper butterfly, with small, white apical spots on the forewing and pale marginal and submarginal spots on the hind wings. Males have an abundance of short, white setae on the forewings that give them a “soft” appearance. Wingspan is 25-35 mm. The larva is light green with faint, pale yellow dorsolateral stripes, a green dorsal “heart line,” and small white tubercles; the head is roughly sculptured with apical knobs, tan to dark brown in color with a dark, W-shaped mark, reaching 16-23 mm in length.

Habitat: The Persius Duskywing inhabits xeric, open oak woodland, sandplain pitch pine-scrub oak barrens, and other disturbance-dependent habitats with wild indigo or lupine.

Life History: Adult butterflies fly from early May through mid-June. Larvae feed on wild indigo (*Baptisia tinctoria*) or lupine (*Lupinus perennis*) in June and July, with all individuals fully grown and entering diapause by early August. Larvae diapause through the winter.

Range: The nominate subspecies of the Persius Duskywing occupies a spotty and disjunct range in eastern North America, from southern New England west through southern Ontario to Wisconsin, and south to New Jersey, possibly extending further south in the Appalachian Mountains. During the past 50 years the Persius Duskywing has declined dramatically throughout this range, including in Massachusetts, where there is currently only one known population.



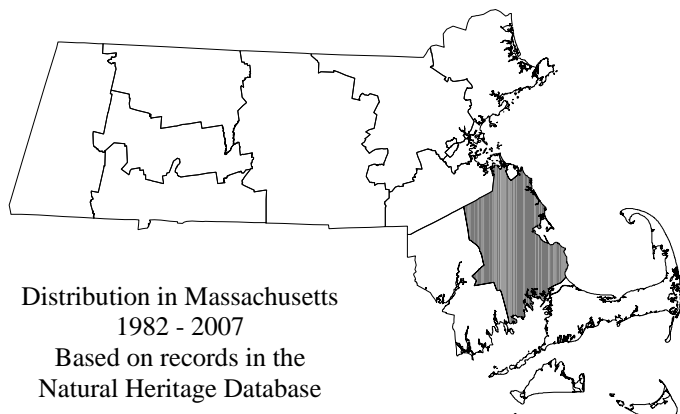
Photo by M.W. Nelson

Adult Flight Period in Massachusetts

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Threats

- Habitat loss
- Fire suppression
- Invasion by exotic plants
- Introduced generalist parasitoids
- Insecticide spraying
- Excessive deer browsing of larval host plants
- Off-road vehicles



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